

UCKFIELD TOWN COUNCIL



Minutes of the meeting of the **Environment and Leisure Committee** held in the Council Chamber, Civic Centre on Monday 18th November 2019 at 7.00pm.

PRESENT:

Cllr. J Beesley (Chairman)
Cllr. K. Bedwell
Cllr. B. Cox
Cllr. J. Edwards

Cllr. D. French (Vice Chairman)
Cllr. G. Johnson
Cllr. S. Mayhew

IN ATTENDANCE:

One member of the press
One member of the public
Councillor C. Macve

Holly Goring - Town Clerk
Mark Francis - Estates & Facilities Manager
Minutes taken by Holly Goring

1.0. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Members and officers were reminded to make any declarations of personal and/or prejudicial interests that they may have in relation to items on the agenda.

Councillor K. Bedwell wished to declare a personal interest in the agenda items relating to Ridgewood, as a result of her role as Chairman of The Ridgewood Village Hall Committee. The Town Clerk had advised that Councillor K. Bedwell could speak but not vote.

2.0. STATEMENTS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC ON MATTERS ON THE AGENDA AT THE CHAIRMAN'S DISCRETION

Two members of the audience wished to speak on items on the agenda.

EL.30.11.19 It was **RESOLVED** to suspend standing orders to enable statements from members of the public on matters relating to items on the agenda.

A resident from New Road, Ridgewood wished to speak in relation to agenda items 7.2, 7.3 and 7.4.

Referring to the minutes of the last meeting, it was difficult to be convinced that CCTV would provide a solution to the current issues being experienced with anti-social behaviour and it was a shame that the mosquito alarm idea had been met with a negative response.

The provision of a barrier, not gates, would need to be seriously considered. The resident understood that costs may not be cheap, but changes to the hedge or lighting were unlikely to have much impact. A barrier could be in use between 10.00pm and 7.00am, not automatically operated, and this would have limited

impact on dog walkers and those exercising , as people could park on the road, as there were quite a few spaces.

At the last meeting of Environment & Leisure Committee, it was asked, what was special about Ridgewood in comparison to other areas. For clarification, residents were not claiming special treatment, but there had been a further four incidents in the last week, and alleged drug dealing on Saturday night. Sussex Police would be notified accordingly through 101.

In regards to the seating area, a post was placed on social media quoting, "*just keep in mind, these are the exact residents who objected to the play area.*" The resident clarified that they did not object to the play area, but queried a couple of pieces of equipment. Quote from social media "*they also objected to the bowls green*" – this was 1.5 years before the play area was considered and had the bowls green gone ahead, there wouldn't have been an option to extend the Village Hall or place the upgraded play area where it was now.

This person also stated that they had complained about the Ridgewood Village Hall extension and fundraising events, when some of the residents had helped out at these events. For clarification, a number of the statements made in that social media post, were therefore incorrect.

Councillor Macve wished to speak in relation to agenda item 7.1 regarding tree planting. He wished to suggest that the land on the entrance to Hunters Way, owned by Uckfield Town Council be considered for tree planting. The planting of trees at that location could help it to appear more rural.

EL.31.11.19 It was **RESOLVED** to reinstate standing orders.

3.0. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Councillor D. Bennett and A. Smith.

4.0. MINUTES

4.1. Minutes of the meeting of the Environment and Leisure Committee held on the 7th October 2019.

EL.32.11.19 It was **RESOLVED** that the minutes of the meeting of the Environment and Leisure Committee held on the 7th October 2019 be taken as read, confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

4.2. Action list

Members considered the Action List that had been previously circulated and agreed to remove the following items, which had now been completed:

EL37.04.19 – Street lighting replacements

EL17.08.19 – Children's Funeral Fund for England

Members subsequently noted the report.

4.3. Project Monitoring List – For information only

Members noted the Project Monitoring List and requested that Project No. 46 (FC86.01.18) – Purchase of new Cricket Mower and attachments, now be removed as the equipment had been purchased.

5.0. FINANCE

5.1. To note bills paid

Members noted the bills paid.

5.2. To note the income and expenditure report

The Town Clerk clarified a couple of points with regard to income streams. Members subsequently noted the report.

5.3 To consider proposals to expand the Civic Centre's Wood Pellet Hopper

Members were presented with a report, which explained that the three tonne hopper feeding the Civic Centre's bio-mass boiler was the primary source for heating the Civic Centre. The current hopper was too small for the size of the boiler and the costs of pellet suppliers were due to substantially increase, with minimum deliveries set (i.e. three tonnes of pellets and our hopper would only take 1.5-2.5 tonnes max). It was therefore proposed in 2020/21 to install a larger seven to eight tonne hopper in the Civic Centre basement store room to reduce costs in the longer term.

EL.33.11.19 It was **RESOLVED** to:

(i) note the report;

(ii) agree to allocate £12,000 within the 2020/21 revenue budgets for carrying out alterations to the bio-hopper (wood pellet hopper).

6.0. ADMINISTRATION

6.1. To note the minutes of the SLR meeting on 7th August 2019

After clarifying a point within the minutes on the hedgerow referenced in Eastbourne Road, members noted the contents of the minutes.

6.2 To review amendments to the Town Council's Tree Policy – No. 48

Members were pleased to see the addition to the tree policy, which reflected their recent discussions in regards to tree planting (Tree for a Tree scheme), and

EL.34.11.19 members **RESOLVED** to approve the amendments to the Town Council's Tree Policy – No.48.

7.0. ENVIRONMENT

7.1 To note the current position of the Town Council's Estates

Members noted the work in progress and projects underway on the Town Council's Estates.

7.2 To review the reported crime statistics for Uckfield Town

Members wished to thank the University student who currently had a work placement with the Town Council, for all their hard work on the report.

Members sought clarification on a couple of points, i.e. location of the reported incidents, but noted that the statistics presented a very different picture to the incidents often discussed anecdotally or on social media. This suggested that in the majority of cases, incidents of anti-social behaviour or crime were not being reported by members of the public or local businesses. There was some evidence of seasonal trends, but in the main the figures were lower than expected in the outlying areas.

Members discussed the change in working practices of Sussex Police and new PCSOs which were due to be assigned to each area. They felt that it would be important to look at these hotspots with the PCSOs and ensure that this informed their patrols and intelligence.

Members subsequently noted the report.

7.3 To initially consider the costs of adding permanent CCTV cameras to open spaces within the town

One member felt uncertain that CCTV helped to prevent or reduce crime and anti-social behaviour. They referred in particular to the incidents of anti-social behaviour and vandalism that had occurred in Selby Meadows. The Newtown Action Group had placed CCTV in the community garden, and the culprits moved to the other side of the garden. Further CCTV cameras had been added but it had not had the desired impact.

A second member felt that to install CCTV in all of the open spaces would be a lot of expenditure, and place additional pressure on staff resources to search through the tapes and footage.

A third member advised of an attack on a relative in Brighton, and although there was CCTV footage, it did not help to prosecute because the CCTV footage was only one part of the picture and there wasn't enough evidence. They felt therefore that the key to making a change and reducing anti-social behaviour within the town, was with building our intelligence and working closely with the new PCSOs who had been allocated to Uckfield and the surrounding villages.

A fourth member felt that the crime statistics did not provide the evidence required to justify spending on CCTV cameras.

The Town Clerk advised that three new PCSOs had been assigned to Uckfield and the surrounding villages. Each town in Wealden District was due to receive three named PCSOs. Although the Town Council office had received the names of these officers, the campaign to promote them in their new roles had not yet begun.

It was also highlighted that Uckfield and Crowborough had been meeting, to specifically look at anti-social behaviour and a number of initiatives were due to be delivered out of this group.

EL.35.11.19 Members **RESOLVED** to:

- (i) note the report;
- (ii) NOT proceed with the installation of CCTV cameras in the open spaces of Uckfield, at this time, until such evidence or intelligence advises otherwise.

7.4 To consider further investigations into the addition of a gate/security on Ridgewood Village Hall Car Park

Clarification was provided by the Chair of the Ridgewood Village Hall Committee, that the input provided at the meeting with the Millennium Green Trust and Town Council staff regarding an entry system into Ridgewood Village Hall Car Park, was the input of all committee members (trustees) of Ridgewood Village Hall Committee at their recent meeting, and not her personal views.

One member acknowledged that there were lots of factors to consider in looking at this matter, including times of day, who would be opening and closing the gate, safety late in the evening, and reporting of incidents.

One member referred the discussion back to the previous agenda item, whereby the introduction of the Uckfield specific PCSOs and need for the public to report what they saw, coupled with doing the car park improvement works in the coming months, seemed to suggest that the matter should be delayed until that time.

One proposal was put forward which suggested that “until we see prosecutions from intelligence and crime statistics, that the addition of a gate be delayed.” This proposal received mixed views and only four members voted in favour.

A further proposal was put forward which suggested that the Town Council pause, until the works on the car park were due to take place, and the PCSOs had settled in and were working effectively on local intelligence.

EL.36.11.19 Five members voted in favour and thus **RESOLVED** to pause on the addition of an entry system to Ridgewood Village Hall Car Park, until the works on the car park were due to take place, and the impact of the new PCSOs and their work using local intelligence was visible.

8.0. LEISURE

8.1. To review initial proposals and costs associated with upgrading Luxfords Play Area

Members felt the proposal to upgrade the play area was a positive step forward.

It was asked whether any other areas of the field were considered by the play area companies. The Estates & Facilities Manager advised that due to the gradient of the field, the risk of flooding and wet ground at the lower end of the field, and ability to re-use the base of existing equipment made the north western section of the field most appropriate.

One member asked if consideration could be given to accessibility, wheelchair accessible equipment for example. The Estates & Facilities Manager advised that this could be incorporated and consideration was also being given to providing proper pathways and ease of access around the play area.

EL.37.11.19 Members **RESOLVED** to:

- (i) note the report;
- (ii) agreed the revised shape of the upgraded play area on Luxford Field;
- (iii) agreed to set aside a sum of £20,000 within the 2020/21 revenue budgets (new initiatives) towards the upgrade of Luxfords Play Area;
- (iv) give permission to Town Council staff to go out formally to tender for the upgrade of Luxfords Play Area in 2020/21.

9.0. REPORTS FROM WORKING GROUPS

9.1. Children Stay Safe Day

Nothing to report at this time.

9.2. Speed Indication Device (SID)

Nothing to report at this time.

9.3. Climate Change Working Group

Nothing to report at this time.

9.4. 2020 VE Anniversary Working Group

Nothing to report at this time.

10.0. REPORTS FROM COUNCIL REPRESENTATIVES ON OUTSIDE ORGANISATIONS

10.1. Active Uckfield Group

Nothing to report at this time

- 10.2. Age Concern (AGM Only)
Members noted the report.
- 10.3. West Park LNR and Hempstead Meadows LNR – Supporters Group
Members noted the report.
- 10.4. Luxford Centre Management Committee
Nothing to report at this time.
- 10.5. Uckfield and District Twinning Association
Nothing to report at this time.
- 10.6. Uckfield Park Run Board
Nothing to report at this time.
- 10.7. Uckfield Plastic Free Working Group
Councillor B. Cox acknowledged the inspiring work of local schools and how they would be looking at working with younger age groups to build the campaign, going forward.
Members subsequently noted the report.
- 10.8. Uckfield Railway Line Parishes
Nothing to report at this time.
- 10.9. Uckfield Youth Club Board
Nothing to report at this time.
- 10.10. Wealden Bus Alliance
Nothing to report at this time.
- 10.11 All Weather Pitch Operational Group
Nothing to report at this time.

11.0 CHAIRMANS ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chairman, Councillor J. Beesley advised how saddened he was to hear of the recent vandalism at Hempstead Play Area. He urged members of the public to report anything they see, no matter how small, as it could build part of a bigger picture.

12.0. CONFIDENTIAL BUSINESS

EL.38.11.19 It was **RESOLVED** that pursuant to Section 1 (2) of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960, because of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted it was advisable in the public interest that the public be temporarily excluded and they were instructed to withdraw.

- 12.1. To consider a report on the Marketing programme
Members noted the reports.

The meeting finished at 8.30pm